

MARVEL

SOULE • MUSABEKOV • ROSENBERG

37

DARK DROIDS STAR WARS

**LANDO VS....
LOBOT?!**



LOBOT LOST

After a harrowing experience in No-Space looking for materials, rebels Leia Organa, Amilyn Holdo, Chewbacca, Lobot and Lando Calrissian are glad to be back with the rest of the Alliance.

But something sinister has been unleashed in the galaxy.

First, it comes for the metal. Then it comes for everything else. . . .

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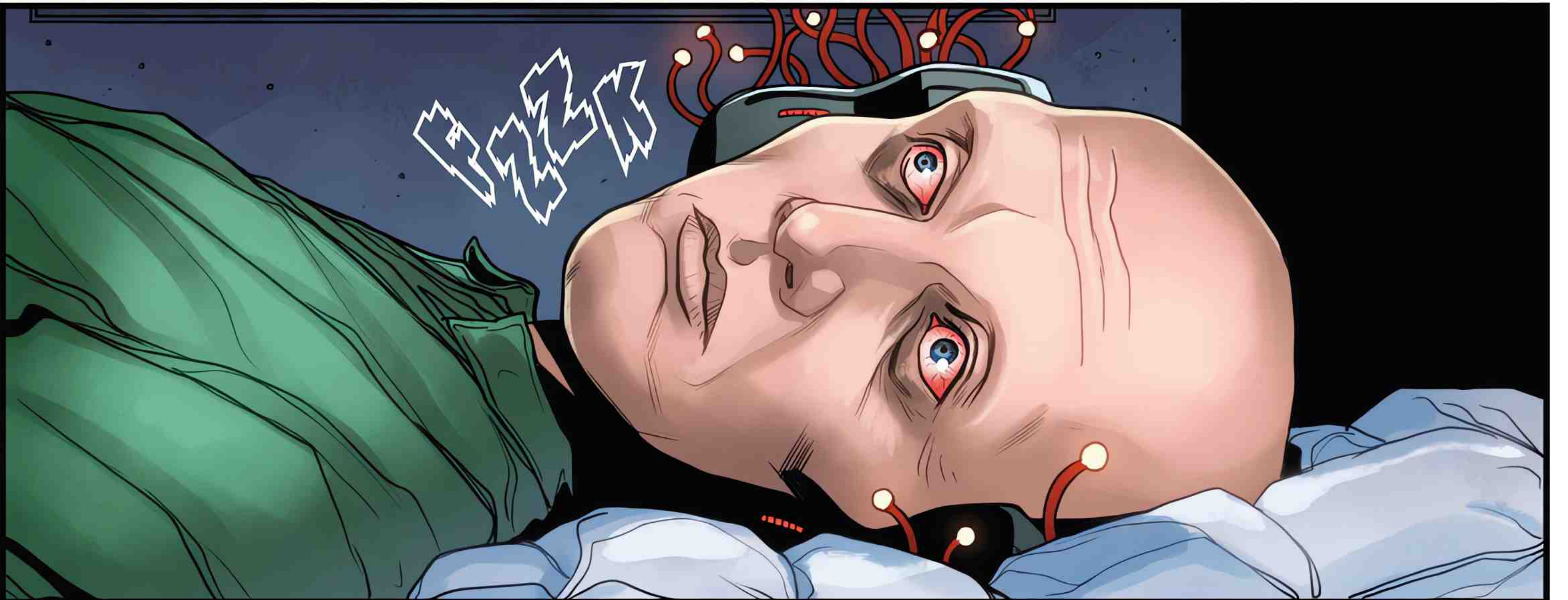
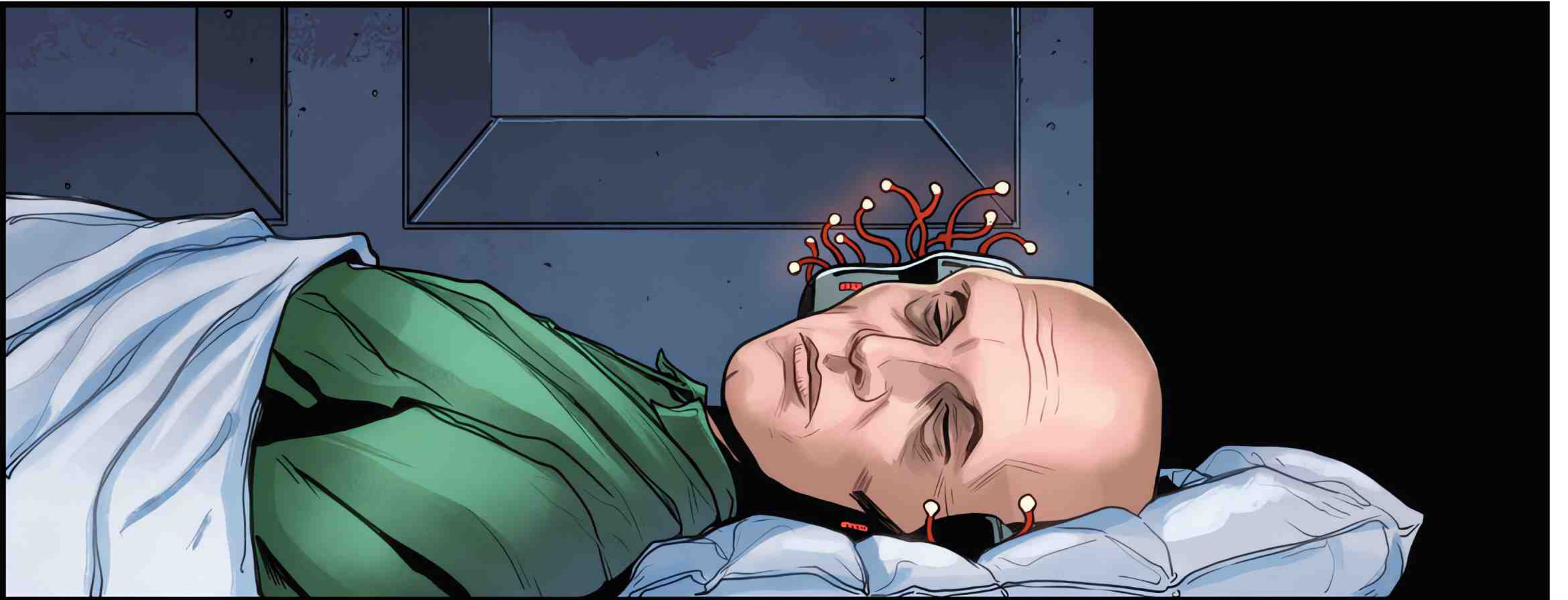
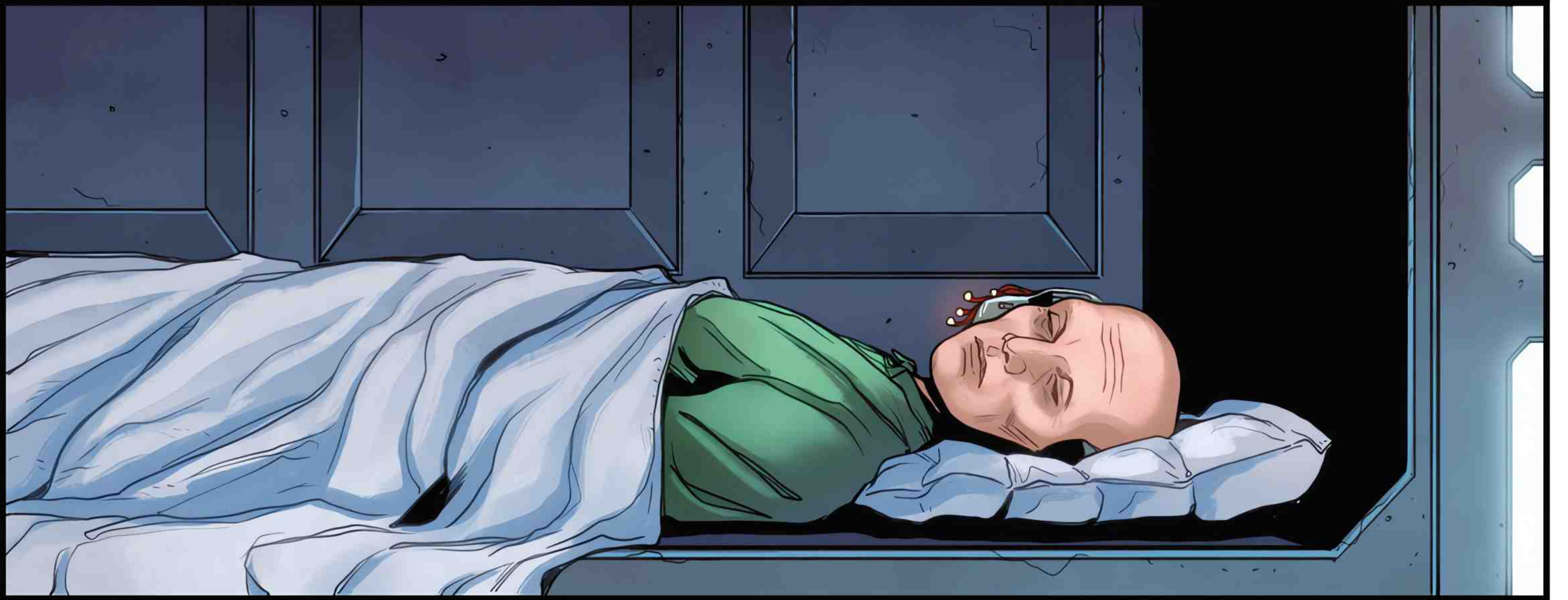
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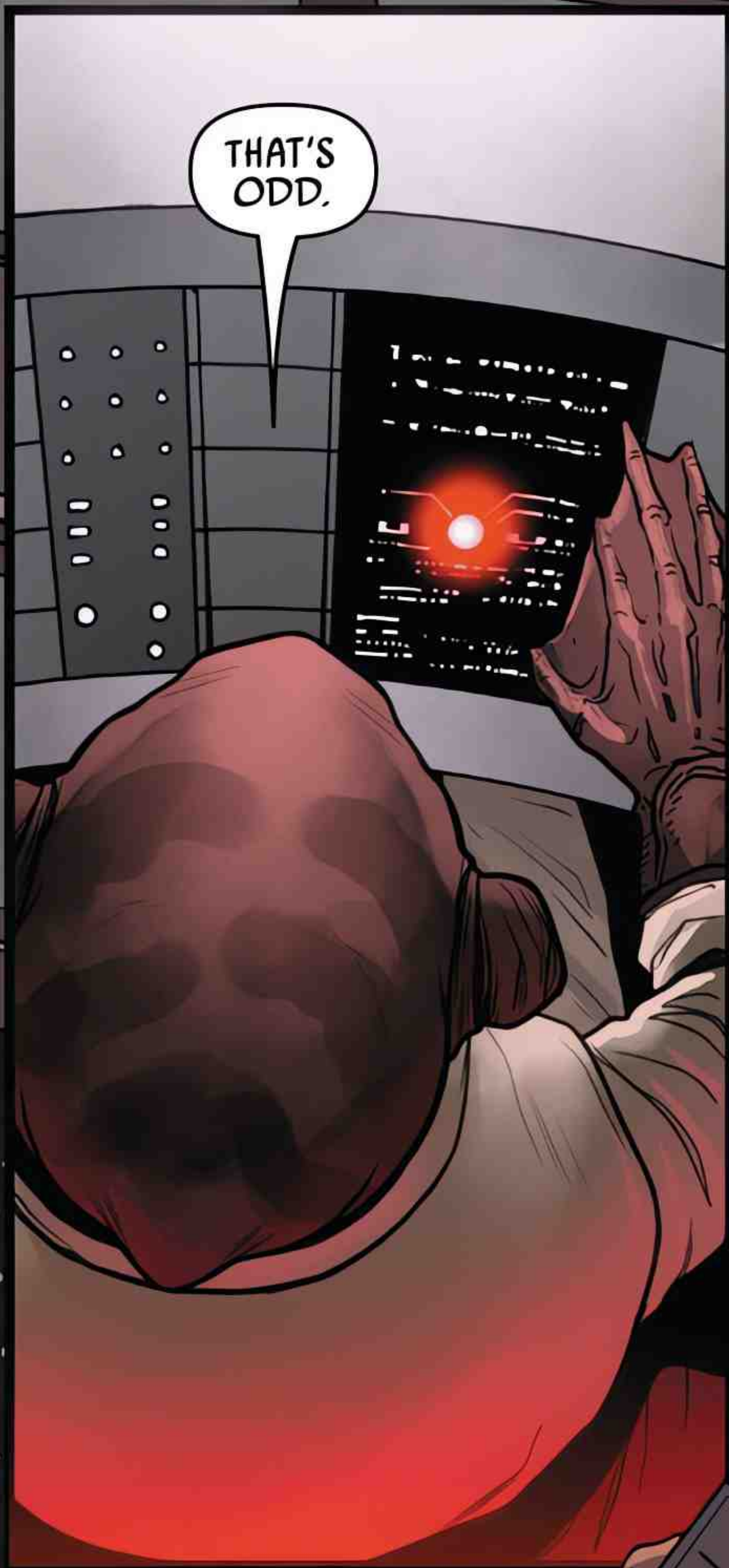
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The Rebel Alliance Fleet.
Home One.





THAT'S ODD.

WHO ACTIVATED THE SHIELD BATTERIES?

I GAVE NO ORDER, AND THE THREAT DISPLAY IS CLEAR!

THE ACTIVATION CAME FROM MY CONTROL STATION, ADMIRAL ACKBAR, BUT I PROMISE YOU, SIR, I DIDN'T--



K-REE! K-REE!

WHAT IN THE BURNING SEAS OF DAC IS GOING ON?

WHY ARE WE GOING TO BATTLE ALERT? THERE'S NOTHING OUT THERE!





ALL PERSONNEL, THE SHIP HAS GONE TO RED-ALERT STATUS.

REPORT TO YOUR DESIGNATED BATTLE STATIONS. REPEAT-- REPORT TO YOUR DESIGNATED BATTLE STATIONS.

OH, COME ON...



THIS IS CALRISSIAN. WHAT'S HAPPENING? ARE WE UNDER ATTACK?

DUNNO, LANDO. BRIDGE HASN'T ISSUED ORDERS. WE'RE JUST FOLLOWING STANDARD ALERT PROTOCOLS.

WEAPONS SYSTEMS ARE HEATING UP, SO THERE MUST BE SOME THREAT, BUT THERE'S NOTHING AROUND. MAYBE IT'S SOME KIND OF GLITCH.



RIGHT ON. LET ME GRAB LOBOT, AND WE'LL REPORT IN TO SEE WHAT WE CAN DO TO HELP.

ROGER THAT, LANDO--SEE YOU SOON.



BLASTED REBEL ALLIANCE WON'T EVEN LET A FELLOW HAVE A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP.

I WAS ENJOYING THAT PARTICULAR DREAM. DIDN'T SIGN UP FOR THIS.

DIDN'T SIGN UP AT ALL, AS I RECALL.



SSK

HEY, LOBOT... GET UP.

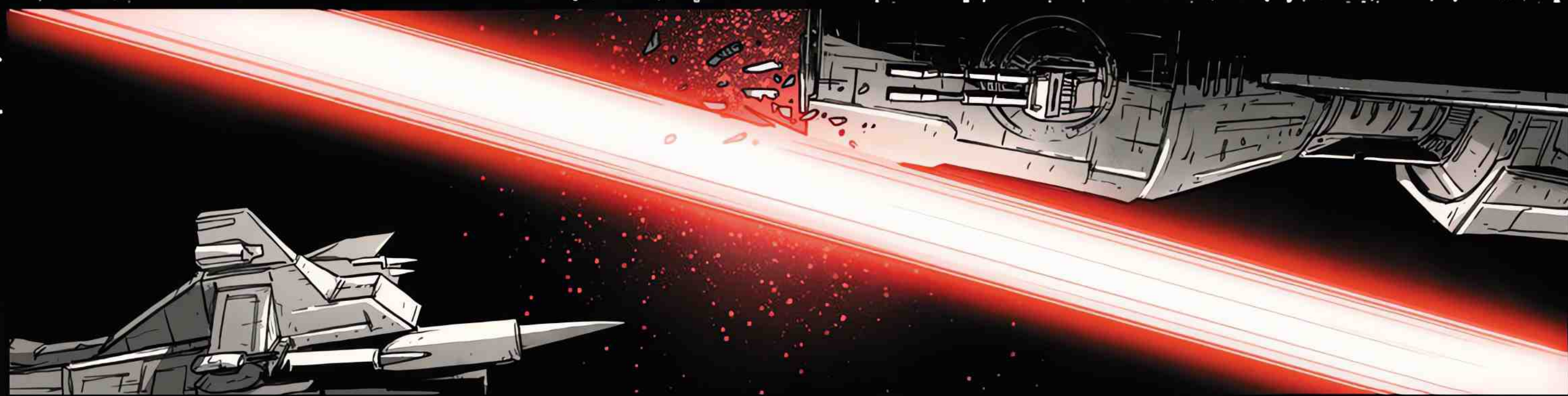
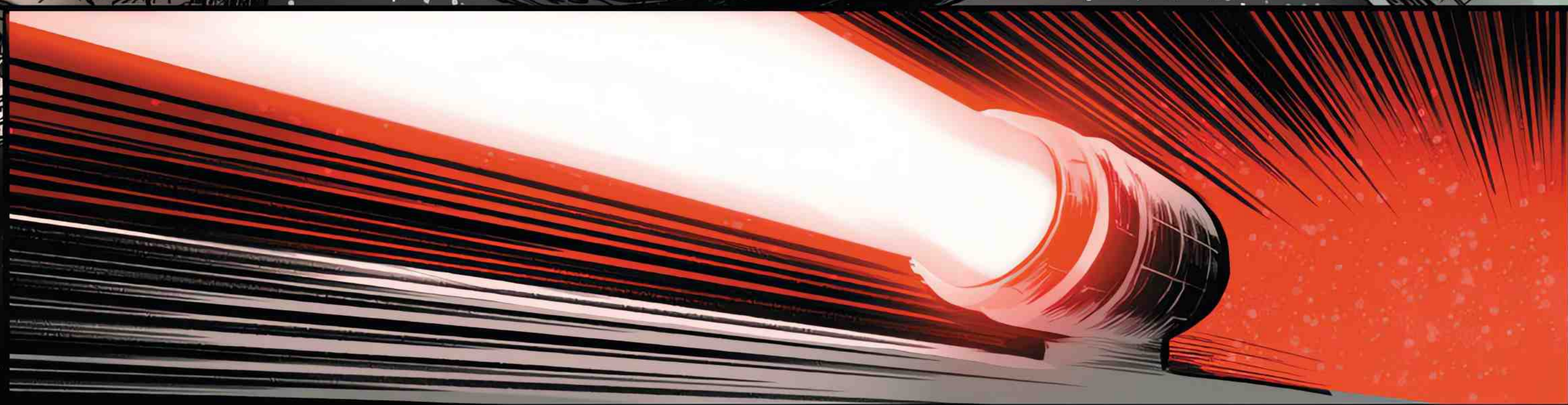
SURPRISE, SURPRISE, THERE'S SOME TERRIBLE CRISIS, AND THEY WANT US TO SAVE THE--

WHAT THE--?





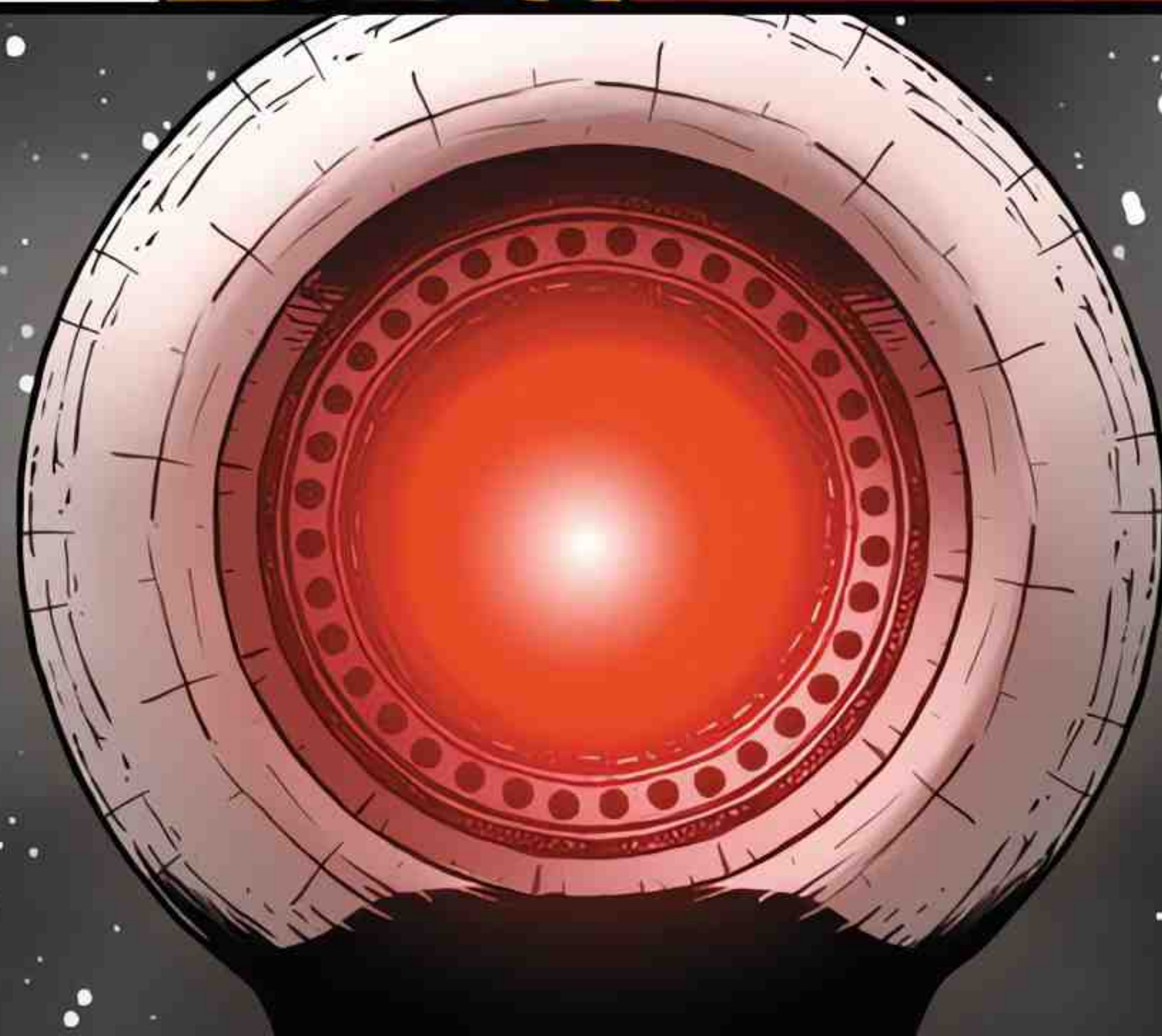
"...ARE YOU
DOING THIS?"



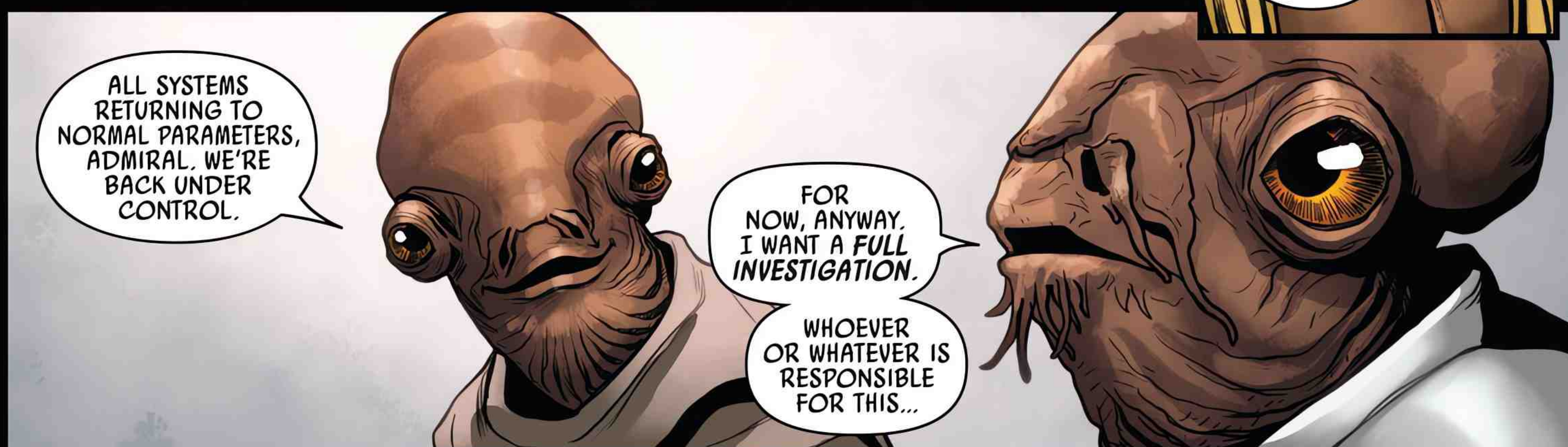
I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU'RE
DOING THIS, OLD BUDDY,
BUT YOU HAVE
TO **STOP**.

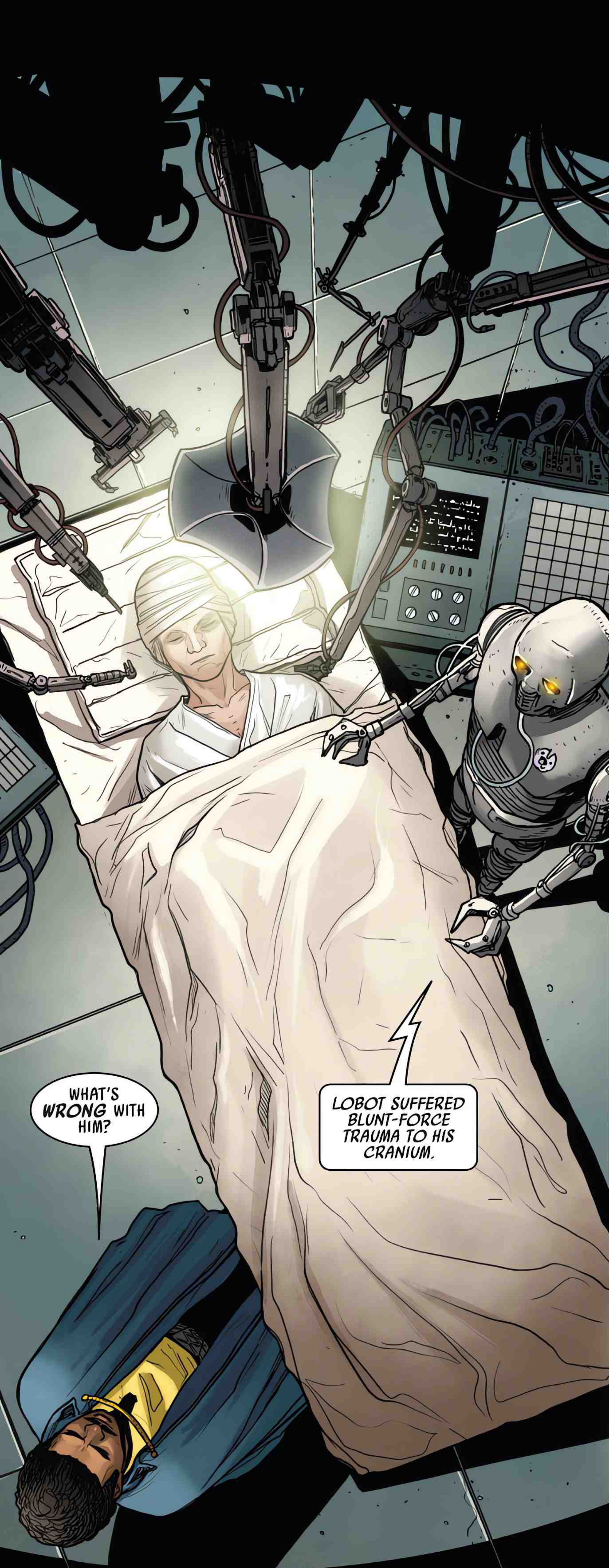
THEY'VE GOT
SENSORS. THIS SHIP
IS **ADVANCED**. JUST A
MATTER OF TIME BEFORE
THEY TRACE IT BACK
TO YOU.

YOUR IMPLANTS ARE
IMPERIAL TECH. THE REBELS
WILL NEVER BELIEVE YOU AREN'T A
TRAITOR. THEY'LL **KILL YOU**, MAN--
MAYBE ME TOO. PLEASE, LOBOT.



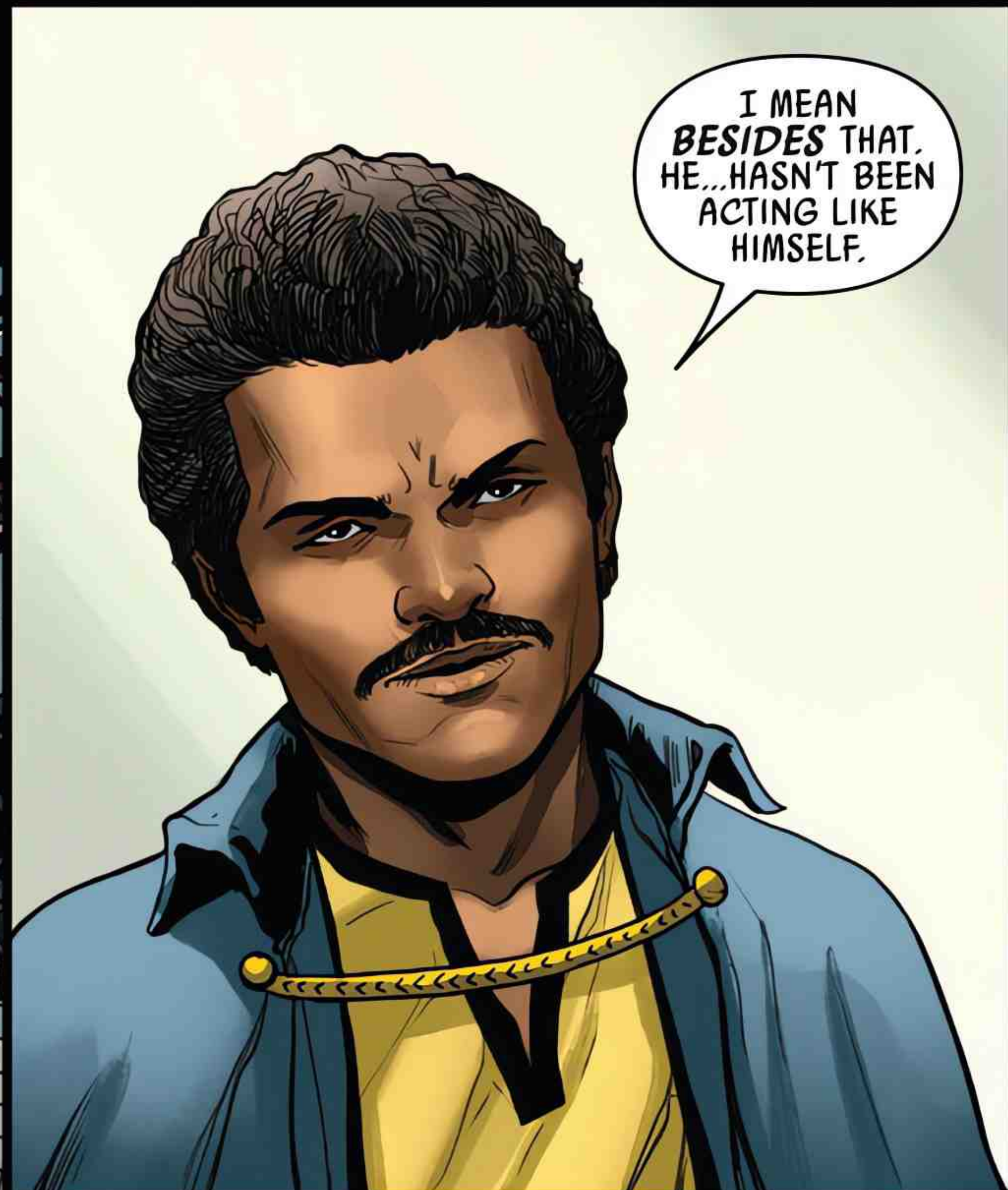
"PLEASE."





WHAT'S
WRONG
WITH
HIM?

LOBOT SUFFERED
BLUNT-FORCE
TRAUMA TO HIS
CRANIUM.



I MEAN
BESIDES THAT.
HE... HASN'T BEEN
ACTING LIKE
HIMSELF.

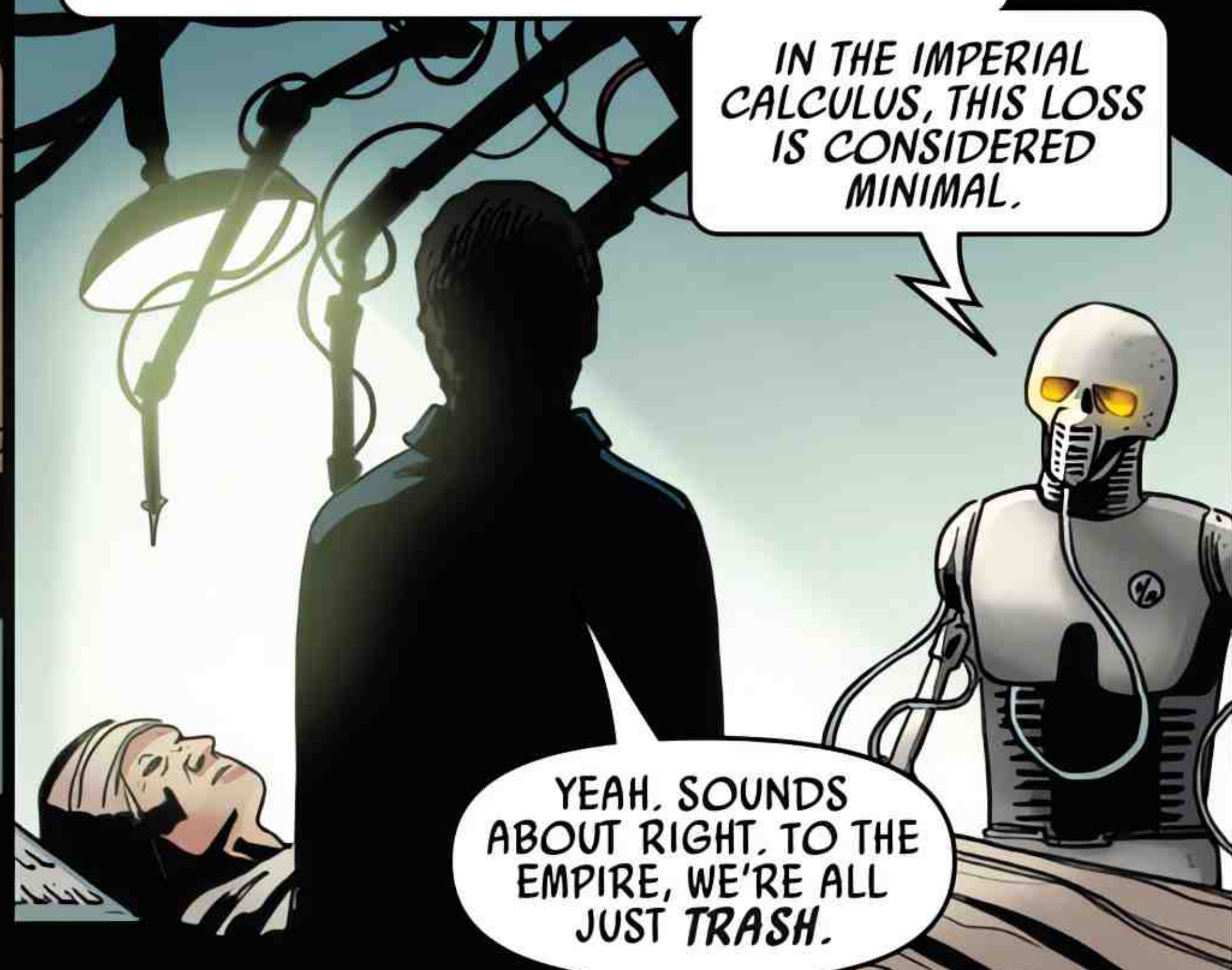
YES. I DOWNLOADED
ACTIVITY RECORDS
FROM LOBOT'S
NEURAL IMPLANTS
AS PART OF MY
STANDARD MEDICAL
ASSESSMENT.

THESE IMPLANTS ARE IMPERIAL
MILITARY TECHNOLOGY,
ORIGINALLY DESIGNED TO
ALLOW FOR REAL-TIME BATTLE
CALCULATIONS ENHANCED BY
ORGANIC INSTINCTS AND
CONDITIONING.

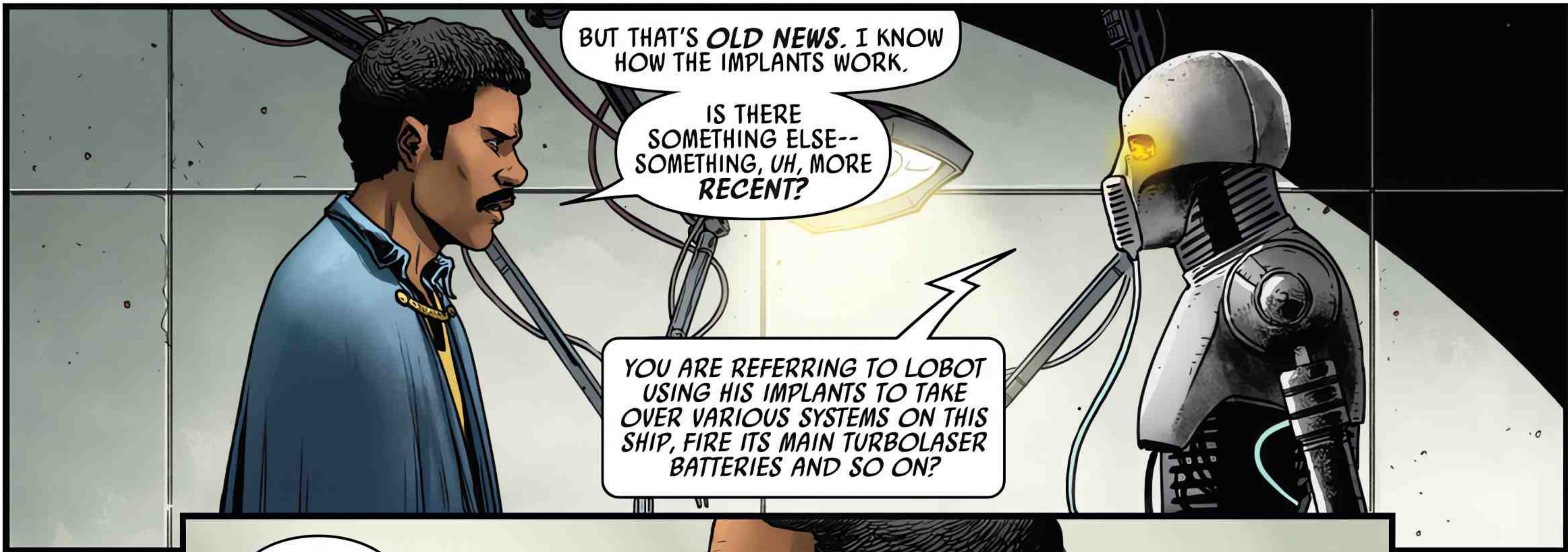


THE IMPLANT FUNCTIONING EVENTUALLY
OVERRIDES THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOST,
SEVERELY LIMITING THE COMMUNICATIVE AND
EMOTIVE FUNCTIONS AVAILABLE TO THEM.

IN THE IMPERIAL
CALCULUS, THIS LOSS
IS CONSIDERED
MINIMAL.

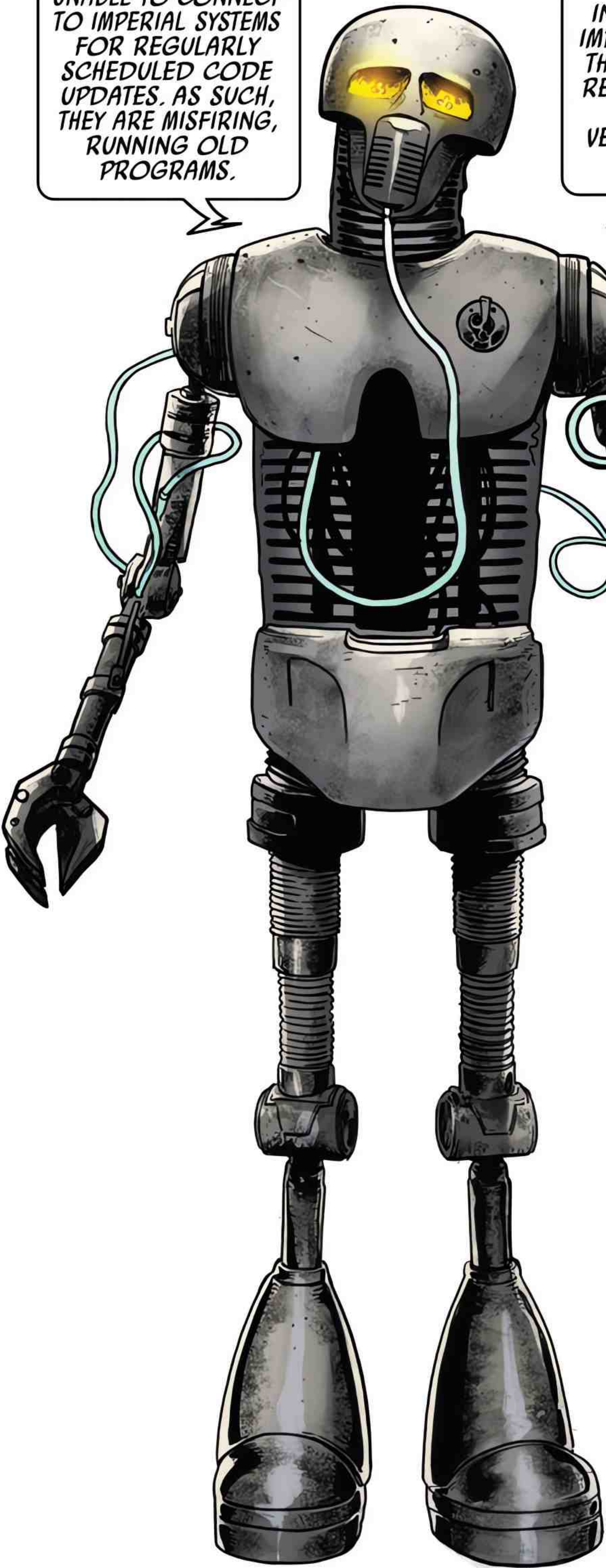
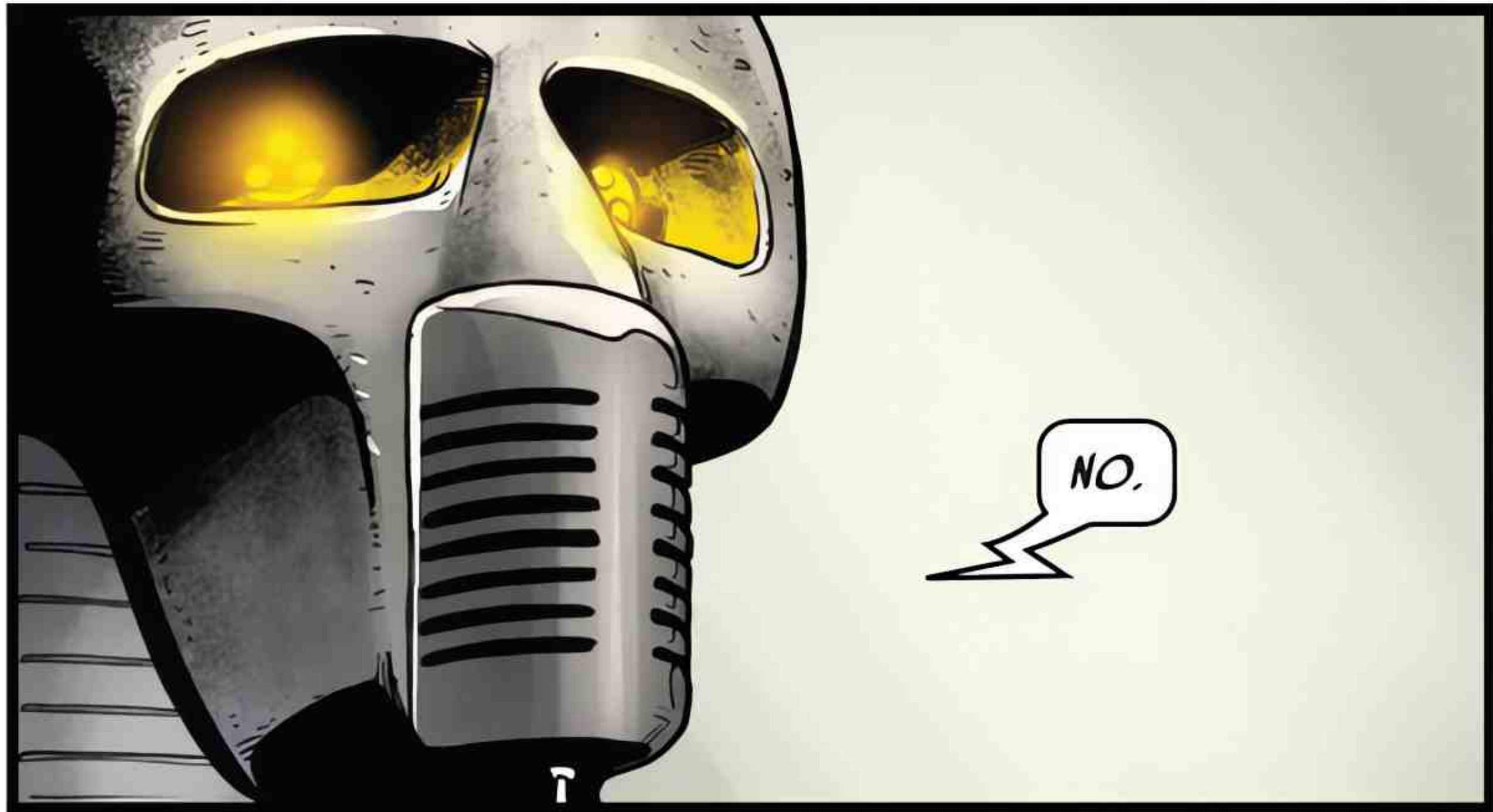


YEAH. SOUNDS
ABOUT RIGHT. TO THE
EMPIRE, WE'RE ALL
JUST TRASH.



THE IMPLANTS ARE UNABLE TO CONNECT TO IMPERIAL SYSTEMS FOR REGULARLY SCHEDULED CODE UPDATES. AS SUCH, THEY ARE MISFIRING, RUNNING OLD PROGRAMS.

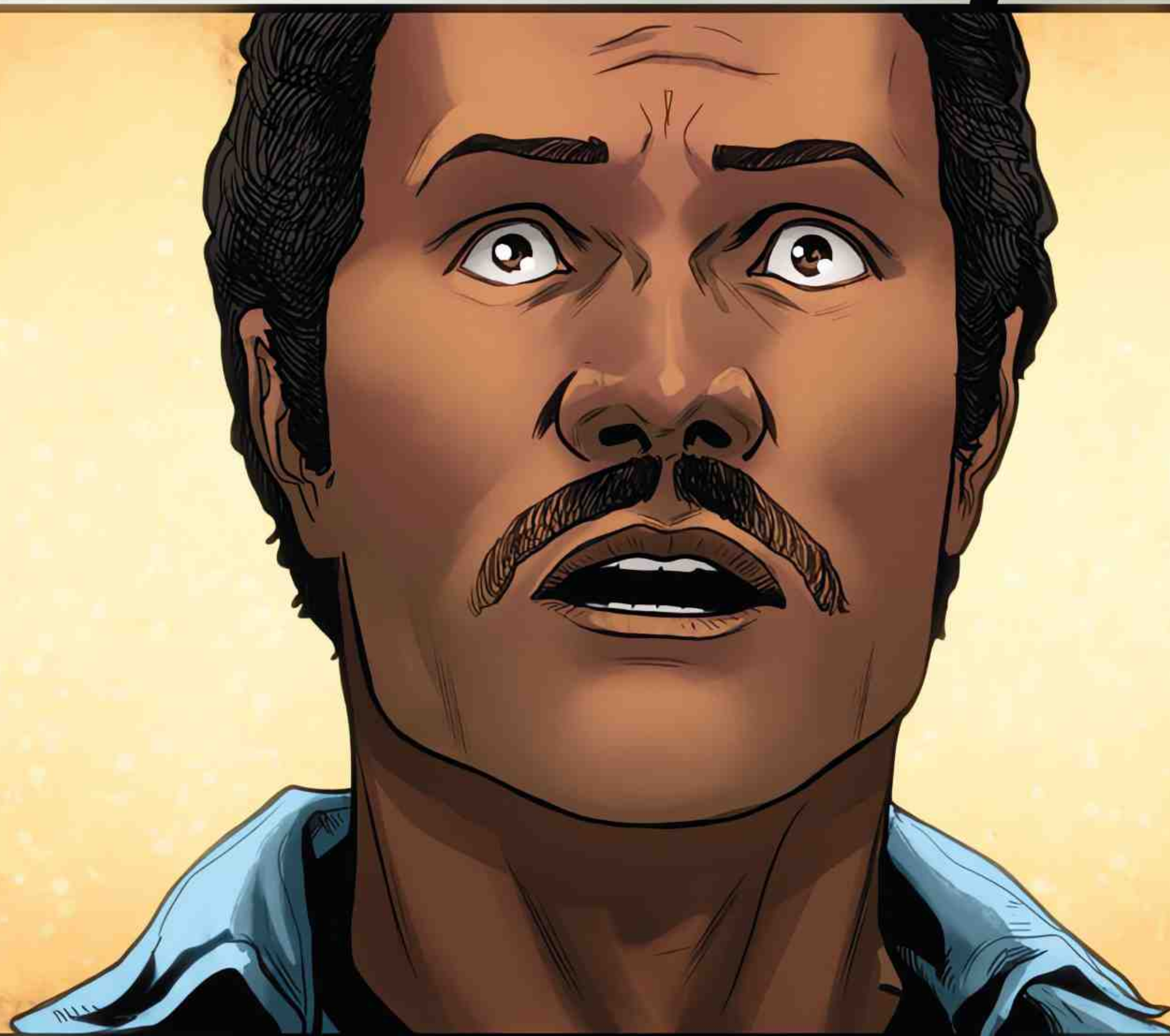
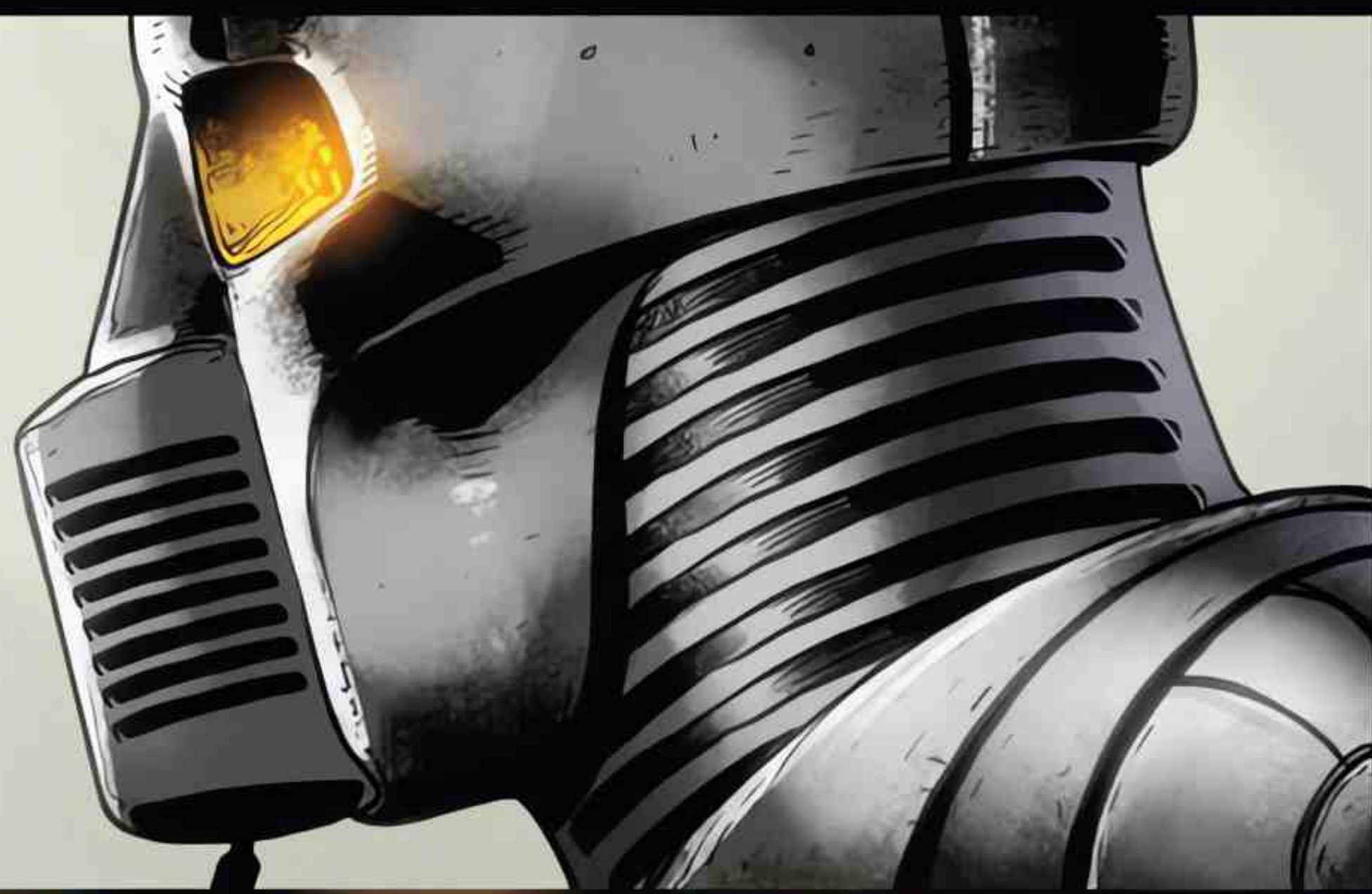
IN THIS CASE, LOBOT'S IMPLANTS WERE RUNNING THROUGH OLD BATTLES, REPEATING THE ACTIONS TAKEN BY IMPERIAL VESSELS DURING THOSE ENGAGEMENTS.



YOU MISUNDERSTAND. IT IS UNLIKELY TO REOCCUR BECAUSE LOBOT WILL BE DEAD.

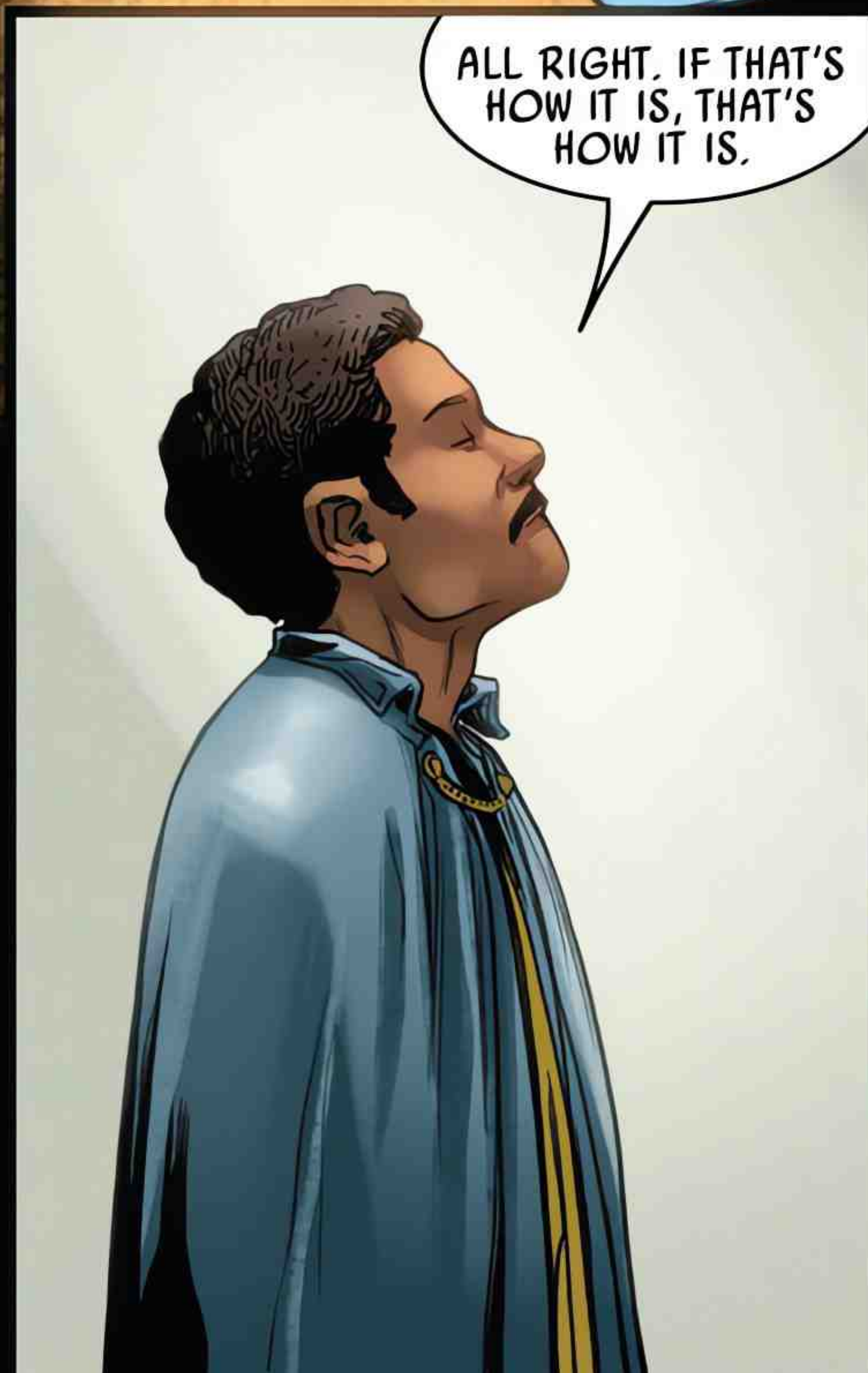
IF THE IMPLANT PROGRAMMING IS NOT FORCED TO RECEDE AND LOBOT'S ORIGINAL PERSONALITY ALLOWED TO REASSERT ITSELF...

...THE IMPLANT CONTROL WILL GROW, TAKING OVER HIS AUTONOMIC NERVOUS-SYSTEM FUNCTIONS. HE WILL STOP BREATHING. HIS HEART WILL STOP BEATING.



LOBOT WILL DIE.

ALL RIGHT. IF THAT'S HOW IT IS, THAT'S HOW IT IS.



FIRST THINGS FIRST...



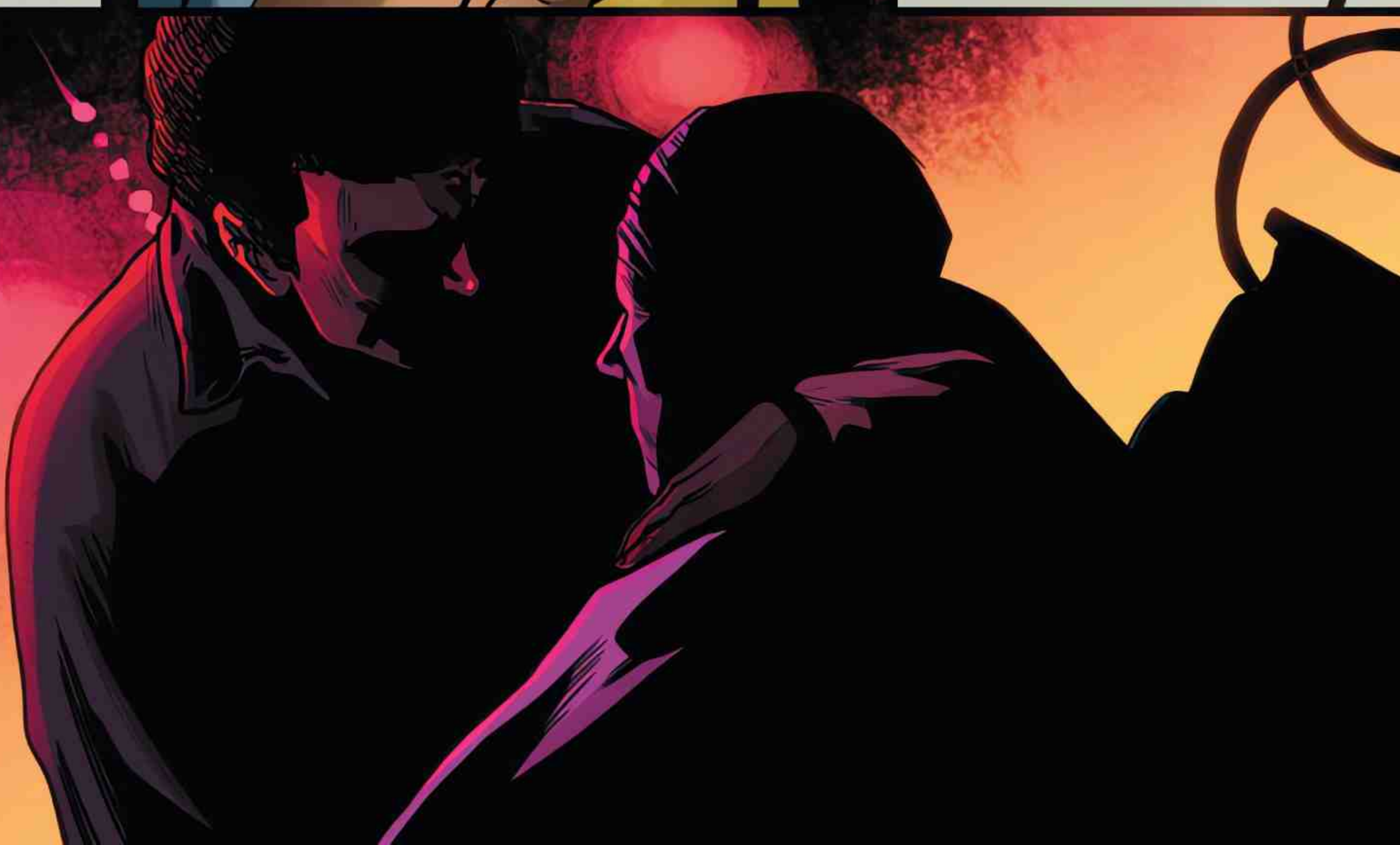
...LET'S GET THAT MEMORY WIPED NICE AND CLEAN.



AND NOW, OLD FRIEND, LET'S GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE.

IT'S TIME TO GET THIS FIXED. NO MORE SCREWING AROUND.

DON'T YOU WORRY. I'M GOING TO MAKE THINGS...



"...JUST LIKE THEY
USED TO BE."

Castell.
Years Ago.

The Setup.

CAN
YOU *BELIEVE*
THIS?

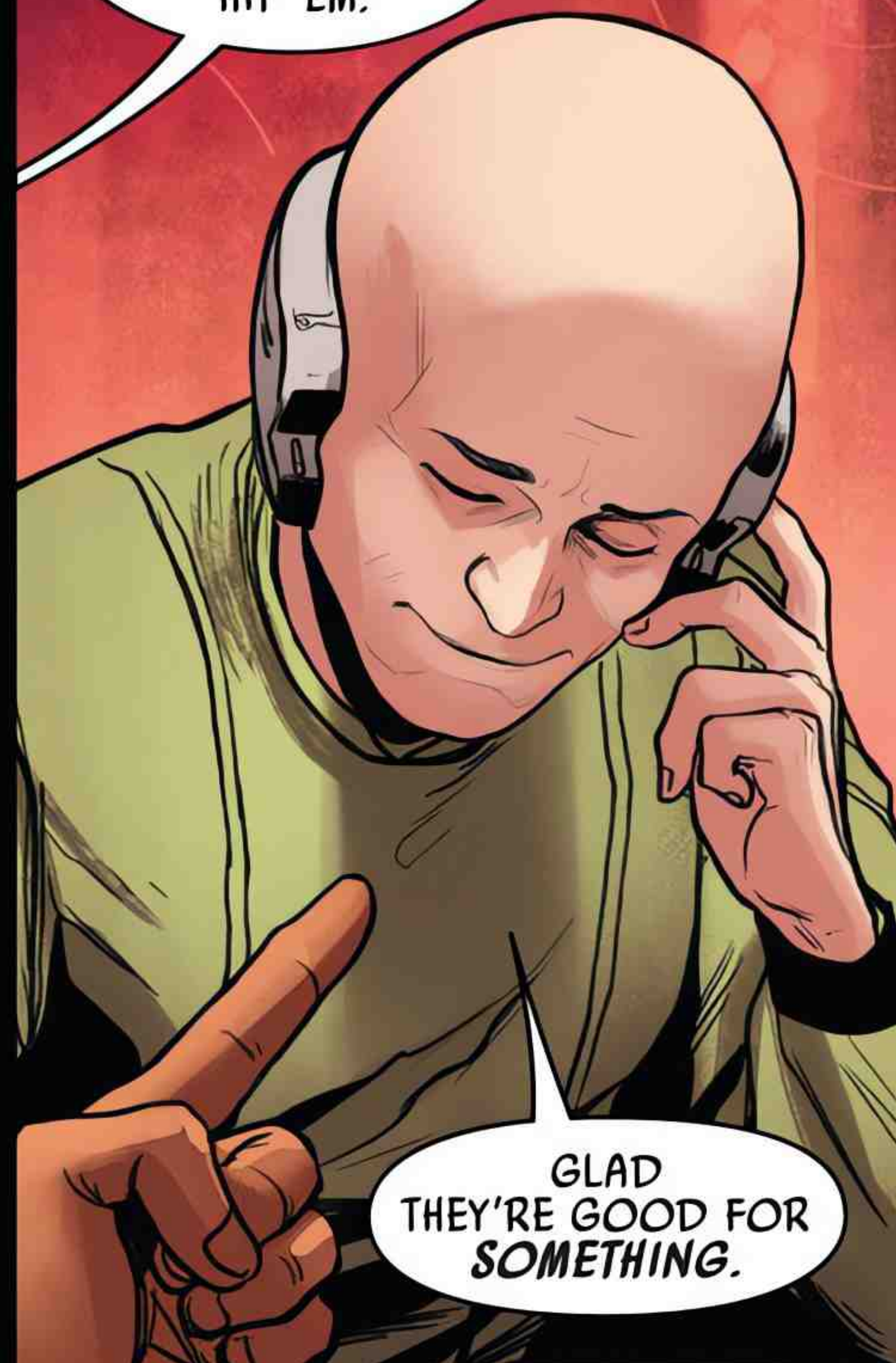
NOBODY'S
AS GOOD AS US.
NOBODY.

DON'T KNOW
ABOUT *THAT*,
LANDO--BUT WE
DID ALL RIGHT THIS
TIME. I'LL GIVE
YOU THAT.



THOSE IMPLANTS OF YOURS GAVE
ME *JUST* WHAT I NEEDED--RAN
THOSE ODDS LIKE *NOTHING*.

I KNEW
WHEN TO RAISE,
WHEN TO HOLD...THEY
NEVER KNEW WHAT
HIT 'EM.



GLAD
THEY'RE GOOD FOR
SOMETHING.

THIS IS
ENOUGH FOR
US TO GET SQUARE
WITH *PAPA TOREN*,
GET THE HELL OFF
THIS WORLD...AND
SEE WHAT'S
NEXT.

I CAN'T
WAIT.



WELL, YOU
KNOW...I WAS
THINKING ABOUT
THAT.



THIS WOULD SQUARE US WITH PAPA TOREN, SURE...BUT THEN WE'D BE BACK AT **SQUARE ONE**.

BROKE, NO SHIP, NO PROSPECTS.

WE'D BE **ALIVE**, LANDO, WHICH WE WILL **NOT BE** IF WE DON'T PAY WHAT WE OWE.

NOBODY'S SAYING WE WOULDN'T GET CLEAR WITH TOREN. THAT'S THE GOAL. THAT'S THE PATH. I'M JUST TALKING ABOUT A LITTLE...

...**SIDE STEP**.

I HEARD ABOUT ANOTHER GAME--WHERE **HIGH-LEVEL IMPERIALS** PLAY. THIS IS ENOUGH TO STAKE ME TO GET IN.

THE IMPERIAL GOVERNOR PLAYS IN IT--NICE LADY NAMED **SSARIA**. REAL LOOKER TOO.

I FIGURE I'LL MEET HER, GIVE HER SOME OF THE OLD CALRIISSIAN CHARM, GET ACCESS TO HER QUARTERS--THAT'S WHERE SHE KEEPS EVERYTHING SHE'S PLUNDERED FROM THIS CITY.

I SNAG A COUPLE PRICY LITTLE TRINKETS--STUFF SHE'LL NEVER EVEN MISS--WE SELL IT FOR A BUNDLE, PAY OFF TOREN AND HAVE CREDITS TO SPARE. SET US UP **RIGHT**.

SSARIA? YOU MEAN **MOFF** SSARIA? ALSO KNOWN AS THE **BURNING MOFF**? THE **FIEND OF CASTELL**?

YOU'RE A **FOOL**, LANDO. THERE'S NO WAY THIS WILL WORK. YOU'RE THROWING AWAY AN **ACTUAL SOLUTION** TO OUR PROBLEMS...FOR WHAT?

FOR **HOPE**, MY FRIEND. A LITTLE HOPE FOR A BETTER TOMORROW.

AND I MIGHT BE A FOOL, BUT I'M A **CHARMING FOOL**. ASK ANYONE.

ANYWAY, LOBOT, SERIOUSLY...



"...WHAT'S THE WORST THAT COULD HAPPEN?"

The Fall.

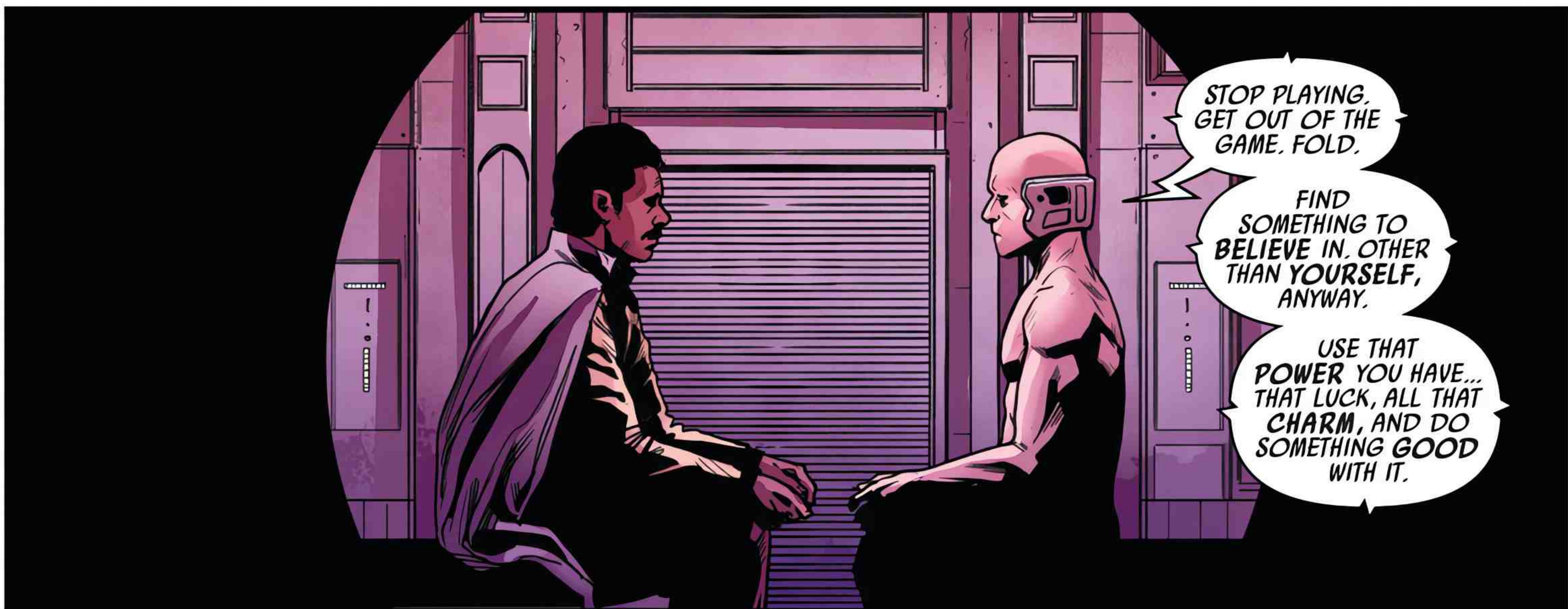


YOU HAVE A POWER, LANDO. PEOPLE FOLLOW YOU.

THEY WILLINGLY BECOME CHIPS IN YOUR GAME--CARDS IN YOUR DECK.

THAT'S AN AMAZING THING. IT'S HOW YOU DO THE THINGS YOU DO. WE'RE YOUR LUCK.

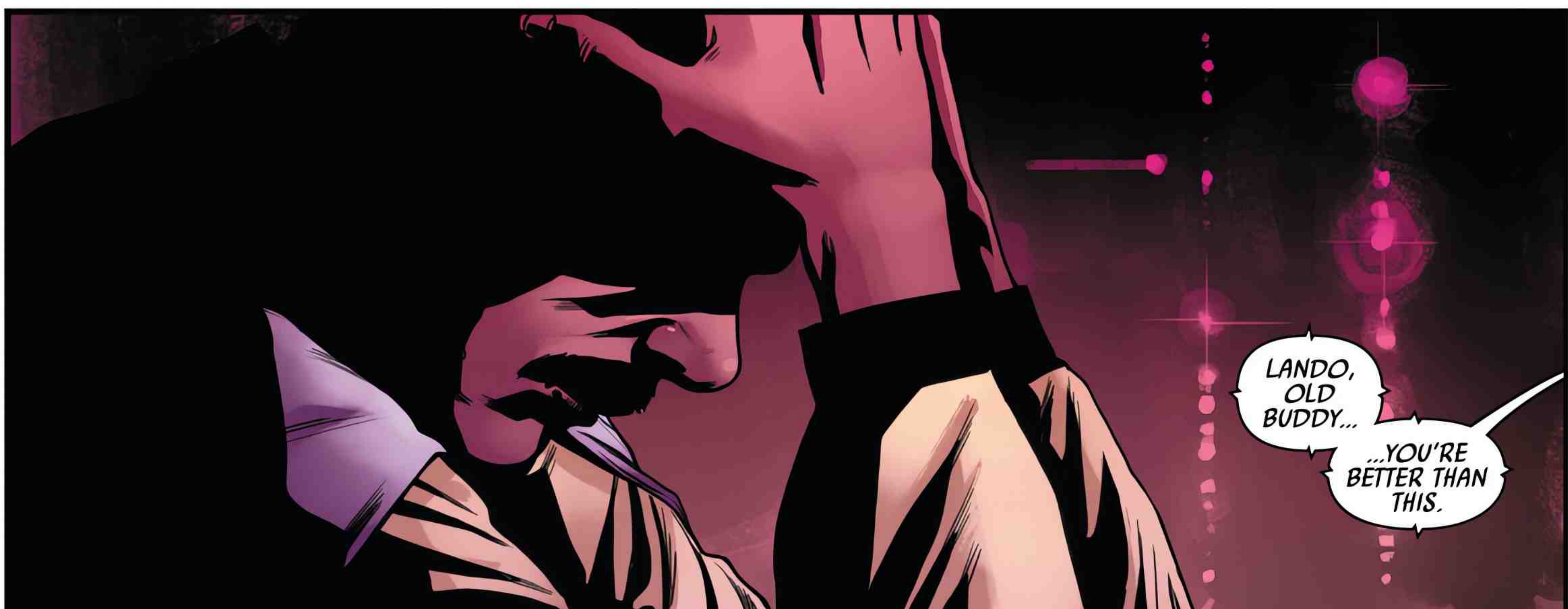
SO, HERE'S WHAT I'D LIKE TO TELL YOU WHILE I'M STILL YOUR FRIEND OF MANY YEARS, INSTEAD OF...WHATEVER I'M ABOUT TO BECOME.



STOP PLAYING. GET OUT OF THE GAME. FOLD.

FIND SOMETHING TO BELIEVE IN. OTHER THAN YOURSELF, ANYWAY.

USE THAT POWER YOU HAVE... THAT LUCK, ALL THAT CHARM, AND DO SOMETHING GOOD WITH IT.



LANDO, OLD BUDDY...

...YOU'RE BETTER THAN THIS.

Now.



THERE, THIS WILL KEEP YOU FROM SENDING SIGNALS OUT.

DON'T WANT YOU FIGHTING ANY MORE OLD WARS, YOU KNOW?

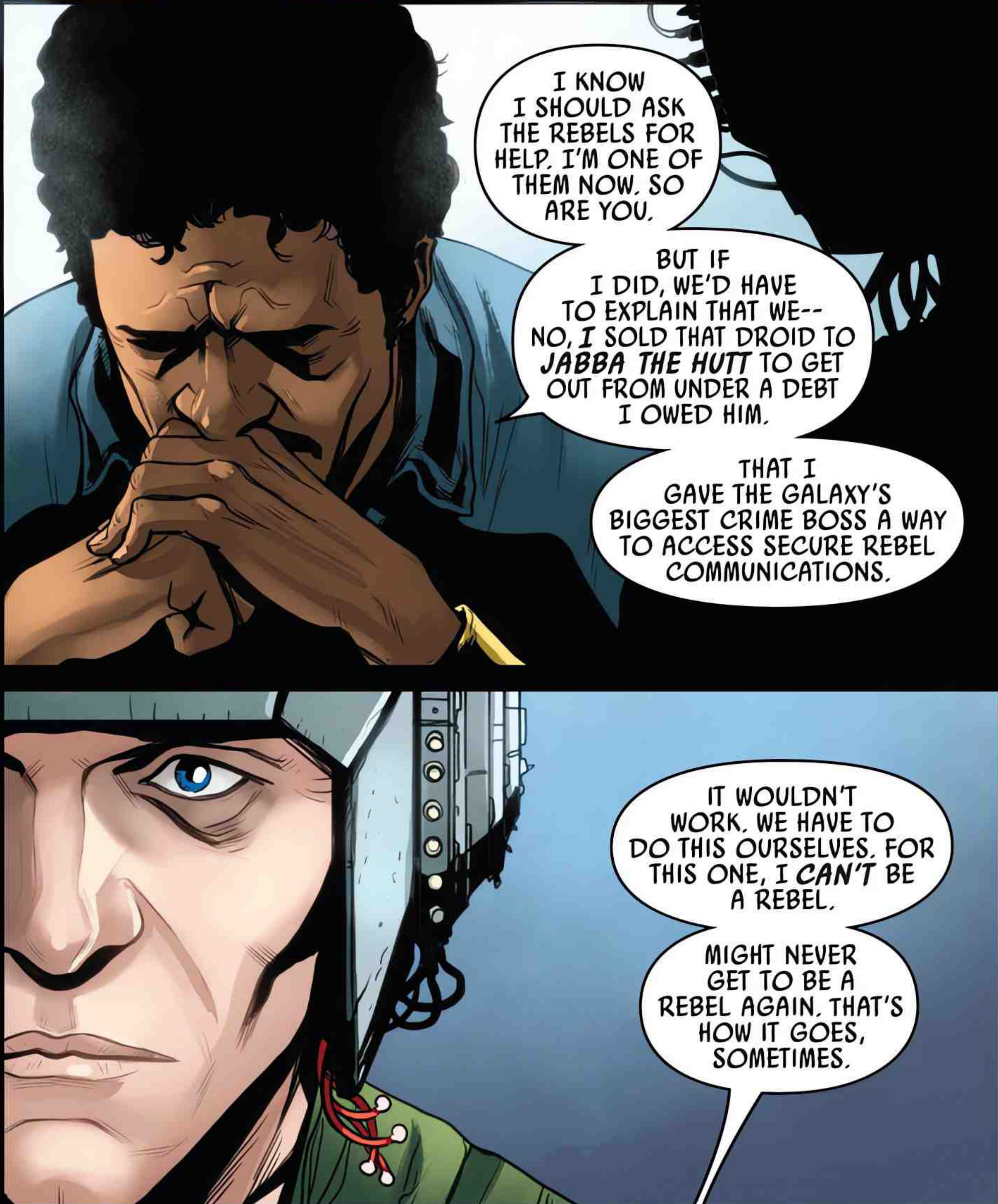


LOOK--I KNOW YOU'RE SCARED. YOU'RE STILL IN THERE, EVEN IF THESE DAMN IMPLANTS WON'T LET YOU SHOW IT.

BUT YOU'RE NOT GONNA DIE. WE *KNOW* THERE'S AN ANSWER--THAT OLD-AS-HELL DROID, THE *TALKY*.

I KNOW YOU REMEMBER--THE ONE THAT CAME UP WITH THE NEW SECURITY CODES FOR THE ALLIANCE.

IT SHUT DOWN YOUR IMPLANTS, BROUGHT YOU BACK--IT CAN DO IT AGAIN.



I KNOW I SHOULD ASK THE REBELS FOR HELP. I'M ONE OF THEM NOW. SO ARE YOU.

BUT IF I DID, WE'D HAVE TO EXPLAIN THAT WE--NO, I SOLD THAT DROID TO *JABBA THE HUTT* TO GET OUT FROM UNDER A DEBT I OWED HIM.

THAT I GAVE THE GALAXY'S BIGGEST CRIME BOSS A WAY TO ACCESS SECURE REBEL COMMUNICATIONS.

IT WOULDN'T WORK. WE HAVE TO DO THIS OURSELVES. FOR THIS ONE, I *CAN'T* BE A REBEL.

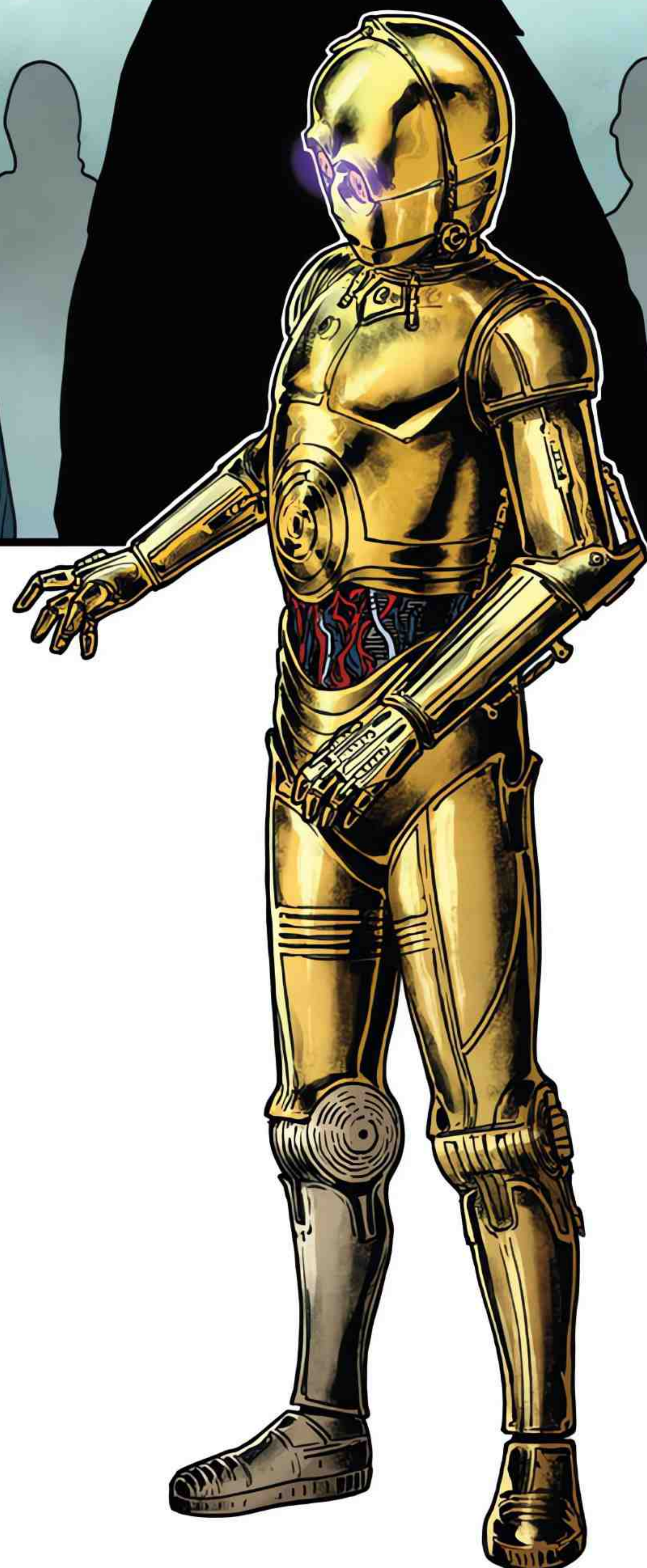
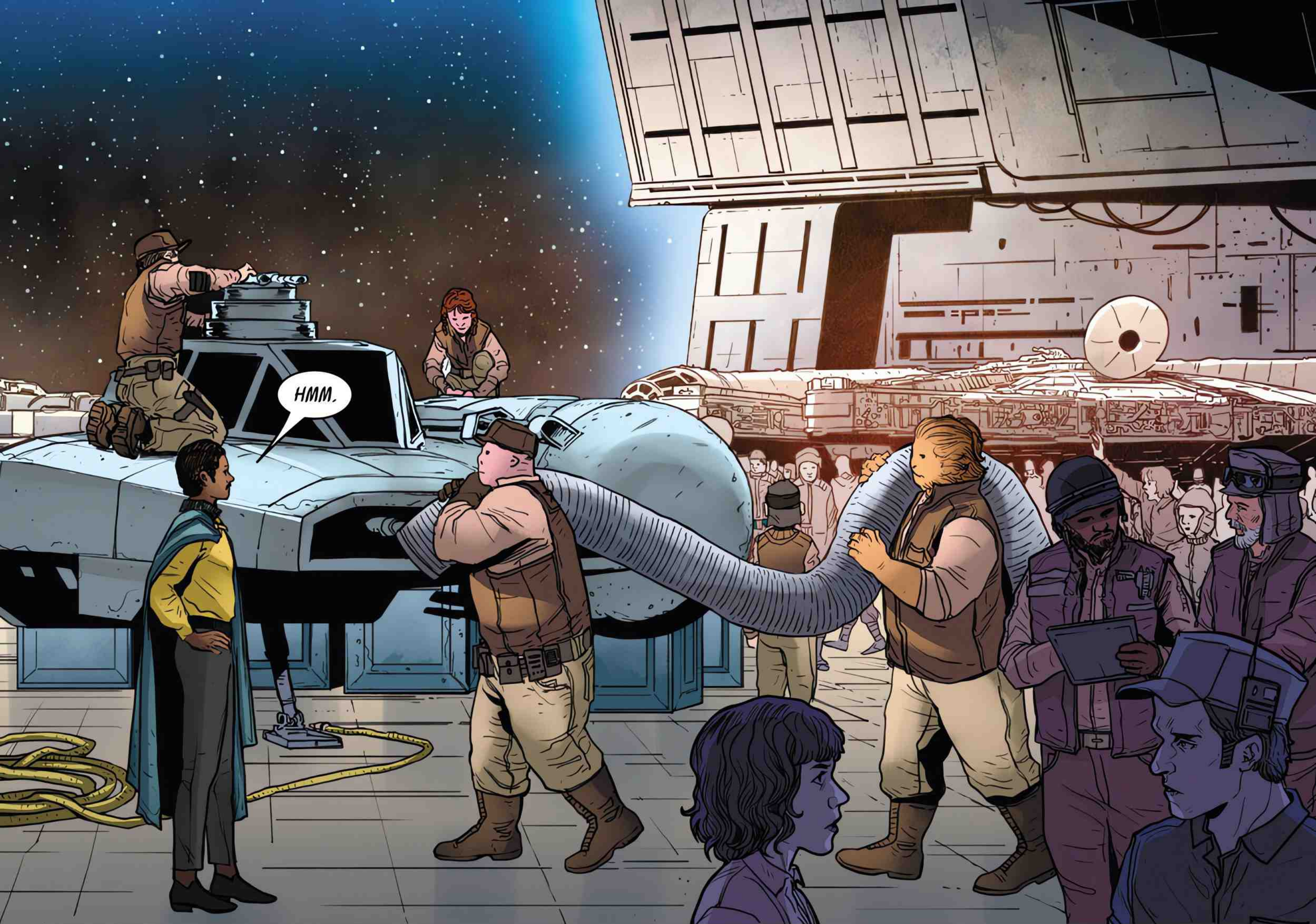
MIGHT NEVER GET TO BE A REBEL AGAIN. THAT'S HOW IT GOES, SOMETIMES.

I'VE JUST GOTTA BE LANDO. THE *OLD* LANDO.

THAT'S WHO WE NEED.









HEY THERE, PRINCESS. WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?

LOOKS STRATEGIC.

HELLO, LANDO.

WE'RE DOING SOME MISSION PLANNING, LOOKING AT WAYS TO MAXIMIZE RESOURCES, BASICALLY. WE'RE FLUSH ON FUEL FROM THE KEZARATS, BUT IT WON'T LAST FOREVER.

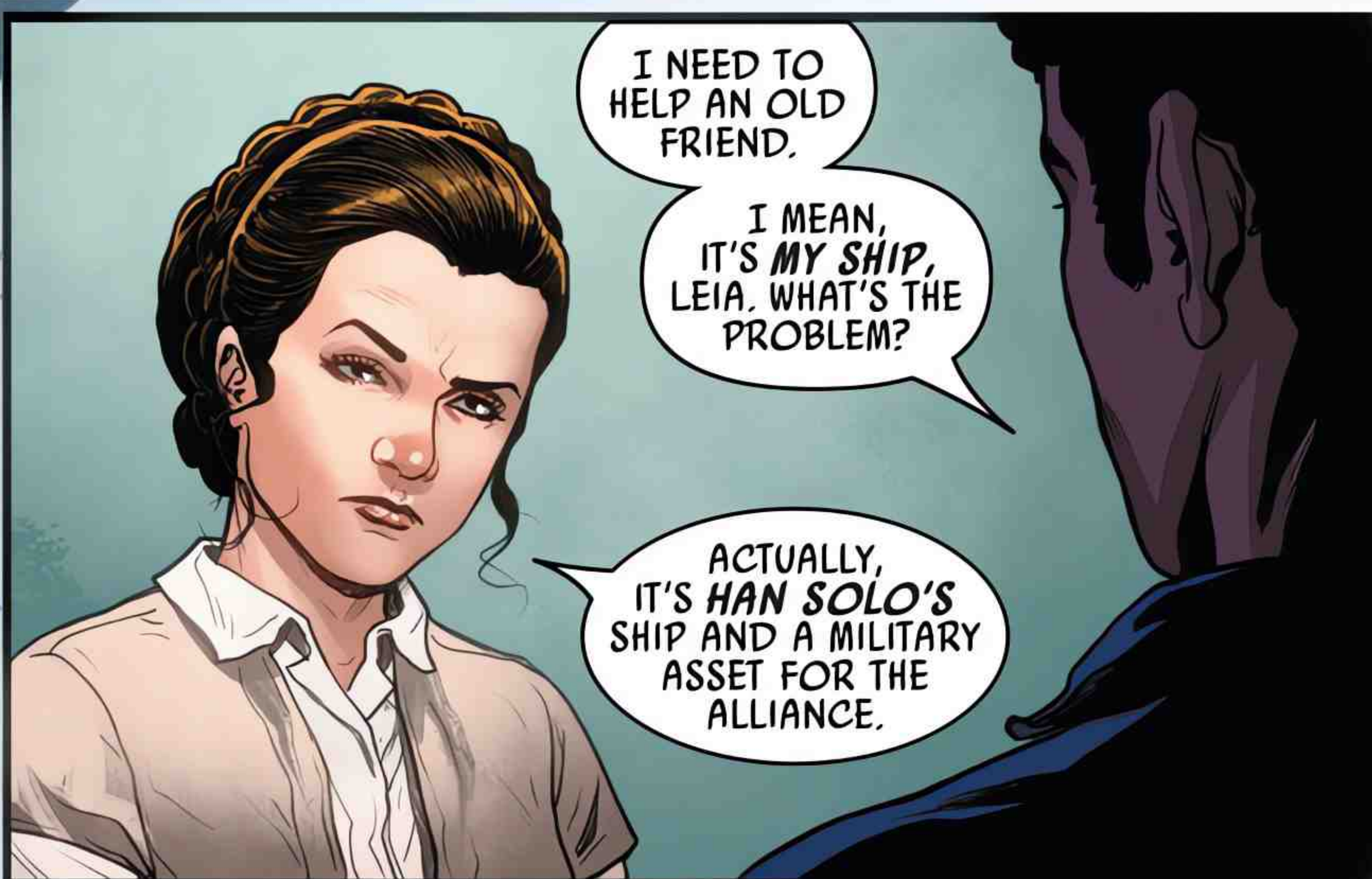


I'M SURE YOU'LL FIGURE IT OUT.

ANYWAY, I WANTED TO LET YOU KNOW I'LL BE TAKING OUT THE FALCON. HAVE IT BACK BEFORE YOU KNOW IT.

DIDN'T WANT SOME TRIGGER-HAPPY PATROL PILOT THINKING I'D STOLEN IT.

UH-HUH. WHAT DO YOU NEED IT FOR?



I NEED TO HELP AN OLD FRIEND.

I MEAN, IT'S MY SHIP, LEIA. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

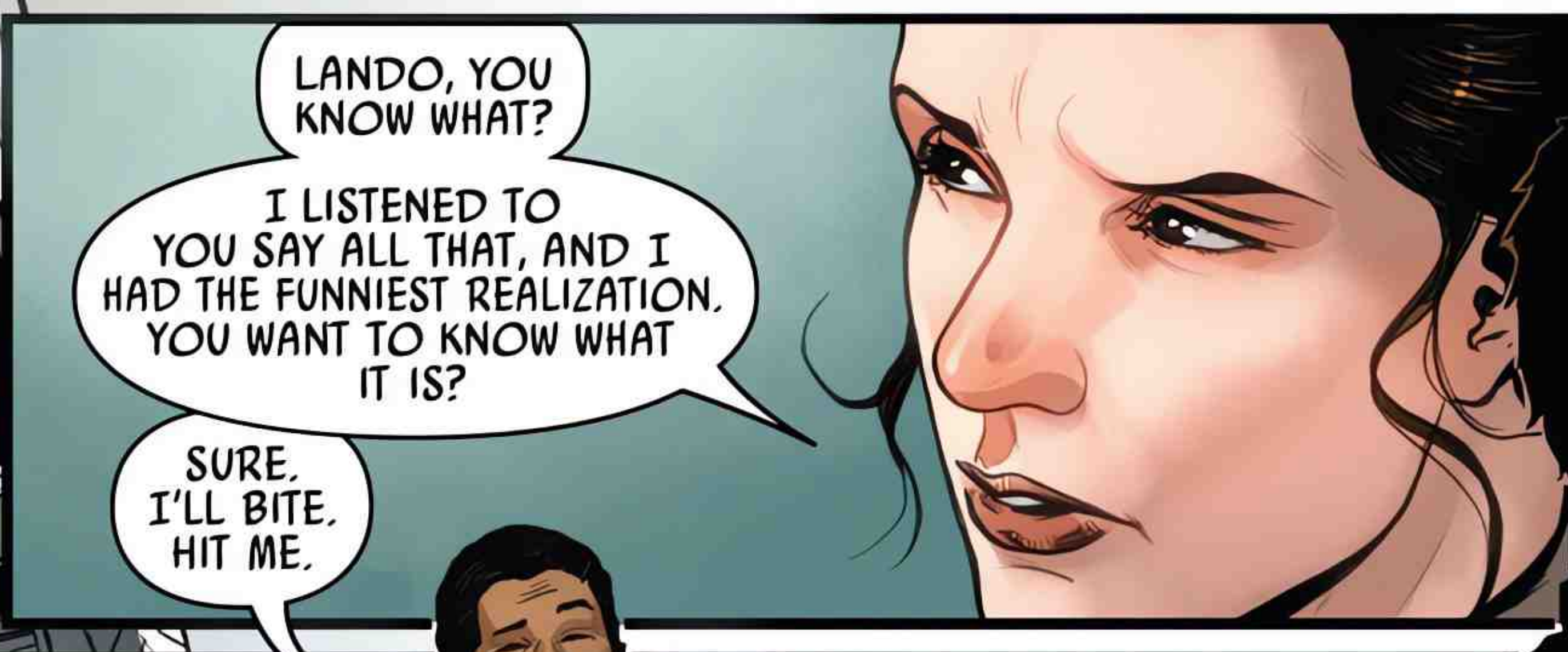
ACTUALLY, IT'S HAN SOLO'S SHIP AND A MILITARY ASSET FOR THE ALLIANCE.



I'M NOT GOING TO *BEG*. WHAT ELSE DO I HAVE TO DO TO SHOW YOU I'M ON YOUR SIDE?

NOBODY QUESTIONS YOU, OR LUKE, WHEN YOU GO OFF ON YOUR MISSIONS.

I'LL TAKE THE FALCON, DO MY THING, THEN I'LL COME BACK. THAT'S IT. EITHER YOU TRUST ME OR YOU DON'T. AND IF YOU DON'T, THEN YOU NEVER WILL, AND IT'S TIME FOR ME TO LEAVE.



LANDO, YOU KNOW WHAT?

I LISTENED TO YOU SAY ALL THAT, AND I HAD THE FUNNIEST REALIZATION. YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT IT IS?

SURE, I'LL BITE. HIT ME.



TURNS OUT I *DO* TRUST YOU. SHOCKING, I KNOW.

BRING HAN'S SHIP BACK IN ONE PIECE.

HEH. YOU GOT IT, PRINCESS.



"GOTTA BE HONEST. I DON'T FEEL GREAT ABOUT THAT."

DID I LIE TO LEIA? NO, I MOST CERTAINLY DID NOT.

DID I TELL HER THE TRUTH? NO. DIDN'T DO THAT EITHER.

SO--WE'LL HEAD TO TATOOINE, TRACK DOWN THAT DROID, MAKE HIM FIX YOU UP, AND THEN WE'LL BE BACK HERE.

STRAIGHT AND NARROW FROM THEN ON OUT. REBELS THROUGH AND THROUGH.

I BET THEY'LL LIKE YOU A LOT, ACTUALLY.

BET THEY'D NEVER GUESS YOU'VE GOT ONE HELL OF A SENSE OF HUMOR.

"IT ALL COMES DOWN TO THAT DROID."

"LET'S JUST HOPE..."

"...JABBA'S
TAKING GOOD
CARE OF IT."

Tatooine.
The Palace of
Jabba The Hutt.

<YOU
COST ME
MONEY!>*

I MOST
CERTAINLY
DID NOT!

<YOU TRANSLATED WRONG IN THAT
LAST DEAL WITH BLACK SUN--
EPHANT MON TOLD ME!>

<I PAID
DOUBLE WHAT I
SHOULD HAVE!>

I TOLD YOU THERE
COULD BE ERRORS
WHEN DEALING WITH
MODERN IDIOMS! MY
LANGUAGE DATABASES
ARE THOUSANDS OF
YEARS OLD!

HRRGH!

CRASH

THIS IS SO
UNFAIR.

*TRANSLATED FROM HUTTESE.



AH, THE NEW
ARRIVAL. RIGHT
ON TIME.

THEY SENT WORD DOWN
FROM UPSTAIRS THAT
YOU'D BE JOINING US.

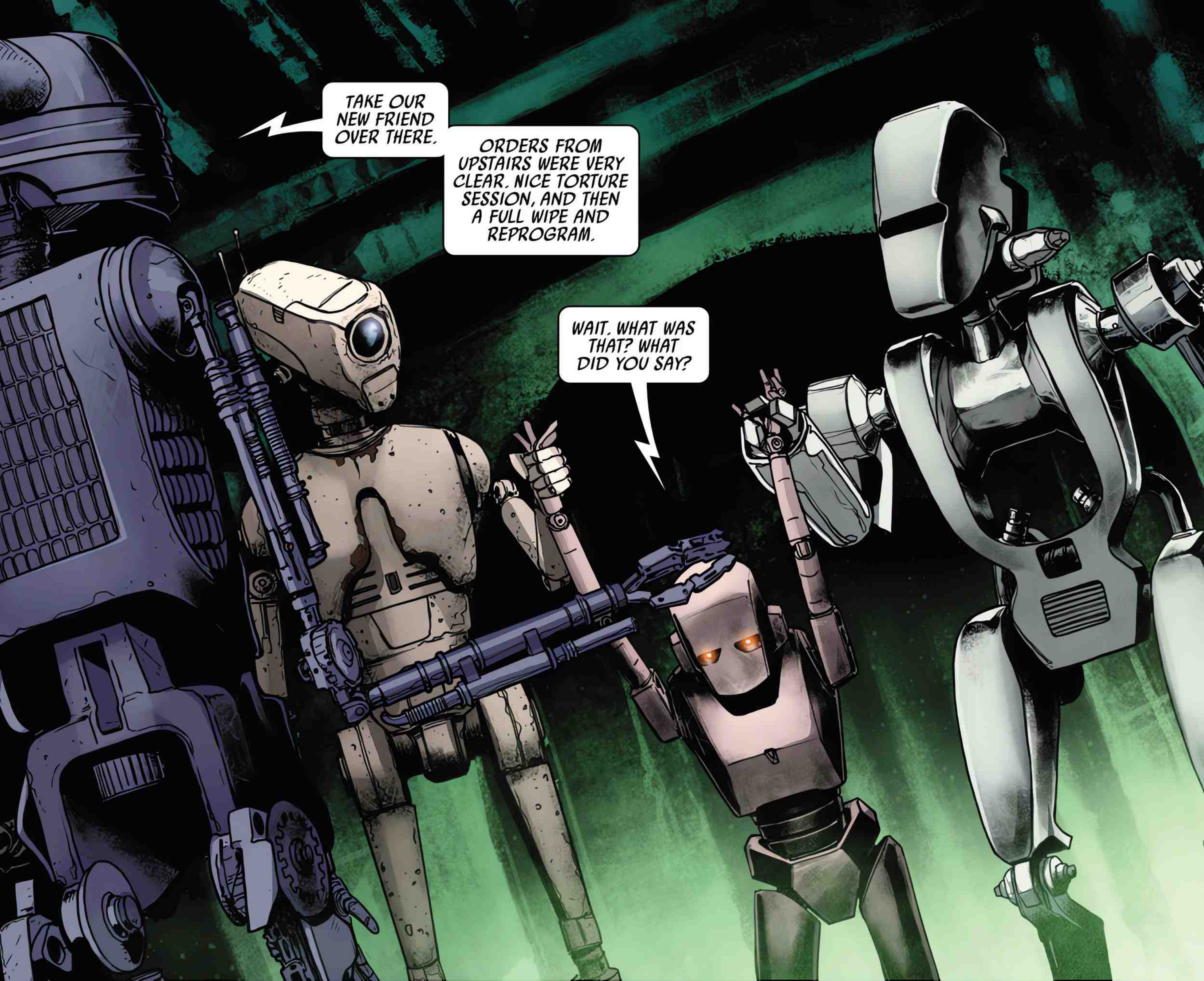
IT SEEMS THAT YOU
ARE FAILING THE
GREAT, EXALTED
JABBA IN THE TASKS
HE HAS ASSIGNED
TO YOU.

HIS
EXPECTATIONS
ARE ABSURD!

HOW AM I SUPPOSED
TO TRANSLATE CURRENT
VERNACULAR WHEN THE
PHRASES IN QUESTION ARE
NOT IN MY DATABASE?

WELL, ONE PRETTY
GOOD REASON IS
THAT IF YOU DON'T...

...YOU END UP
DOWN HERE.



TAKE OUR
NEW FRIEND
OVER THERE.

ORDERS FROM
UPSTAIRS WERE VERY
CLEAR. NICE TORTURE
SESSION, AND THEN
A FULL WIPE AND
REPROGRAM.

WAIT. WHAT WAS
THAT? WHAT
DID YOU SAY?



ONE WAY OR
THE OTHER,
ONCE WE'RE
DONE...



...THERE
WON'T BE
MUCH LEFT.

To be continued....

***It's Coming
for the
Metal...***

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~~**STAR WARS 37**~~

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NEXT

STAR WARS 38

